

November 15, 2017

Dear Muskoka Lakes Mayor and Members of Council, District of Muskoka Council and Staff,

Re: Villas of Muskoka Condo Agreement; Proposed Developments in Minett, District of Muskoka Official Plan Proposals Regarding Commercial/Resort Property Residential Development

As cottage owners on Lake Muskoka, who enjoy Muskoka year-round, we are writing today to express our grave concerns about the current direction of commercial and resort waterfront properties being redeveloped (or developed) for the purpose of higher density residential intensification.

This is completely contrary to the intent of Township of Muskoka Lakes own highly restrictive development by-laws for residential property on our beautiful lakes.

Our stringent waterfront property by-laws are in place for good reasons; preserving waterfront, enhancing property values, water quality, lakeside enjoyment, appropriate intensity of use by boats and watercraft, shoreline protection, water safety, and more.

According to the MLA, in one recent development in Minett, the proposal calls for 43(!) cottage units on a 470' lot – the equivalent of just 2 waterfront residential lots!

Why should commercial or resort property developers have substantially different residential development requirements than citizens building on single waterfront residential properties? It is one thing to have a commercial resort property build units for resort purposes....it is quite another to hide residential property development under the guise of commercial resort enterprise.

Once developments such as these are allowed, it is a slippery slope before every large property on our precious lakes is at risk.

You might say this is impossible. Not so. In my home village of historic Kleinburg, we have seen developers and the OMB completely obliterate residential property by-laws to allow for condominium development on large rural residential lots in our village, changing its character forever.

Anna and Glenn Bortolus, 1361 Foreman Rd, #6, Port Carling, POB 1J0  
[anna@bortolus.ca](mailto:anna@bortolus.ca) 416-885-7707

The only saving grace in Muskoka so far, is that our Townships have held a very strict line on residential waterfront development. And Councils should not be swayed by exaggerated economic arguments that in essence provide a one-time investment return for developers, but leave our beautiful lakes at risk. It is tremendously short-sighted. If Townships are cash-strapped and seeking economic renewal – encouraging high-density residential waterfront development is not the answer.

Once developers know it is “open season” for intensified residential development on our lakes, they will quickly mobilize to buy up every large piece of commercial, resort and residential waterfront property for this future purpose.

This will be a critical municipal election issue next year. Thousands of your residents have signed petitions to protect our Muskoka waterfront. While many cottagers often don't vote, you can bet that if it matters to them, as this issue does, they will.

Please act in the best future interests of our beautiful Muskoka Lakes when you make these important upcoming decisions and strongly resist the residential intensification of our waterfront.

With thanks,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'A. Bortolus', on a light green background.

Anna (and Glenn) Bortolus